

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SAM-01 /079 W

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O P 051830Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6141

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3766

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SS, SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: GOM HOPES FOR COOLING OF TENSIONS  
FOLLOWING AUGUST 3 MILITARY CLASH

1. DURING LUNCHEON FOR EXIM PRES. CASEY AUGUST 5, I  
EXPRESSED INFORMAL CONCERN TO COOPERATION MINISTER MOHAMED  
BENHIMA (WHO OVERSEEING FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN ABSENCE OF  
FONMIN) REGARDING LATEST FLARE-UP ON MOROCCAN-SAHARAN  
BORDER REPORTED IN MORNING PRESS. I NOTED  
REPORTS THAT SPANIARDS HAD BEEN PREPARED TO HAND BACK  
16 CAPTURED MOROCCAN SOLDIERS, BUT THAT SUDDEN  
ATTACK HAD LED TO DELAY OF RELEASE. BENHIMA SAID THAT  
KING, IN DISCUSSION WITH HIM ABOUT INCIDENT, HAD INDICATED  
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HE HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT LAUNCHING OF THE ATTACK AND HAD

ORDERED INVESTIGATION. BENHIMA ELABORATED THAT INCURSION HAD PROBABLY BEEN PLANNED BEFORE WORD HAD COME FROM SPANIARDS THAT MOROCCANS WOULD BE RELEASED AND COMMUNICATIONS HAD BROKEN DOWN. BENHIMA ADDED THAT KING HAD TOLD SPANISH AMBASSADOR THAT MOROCCO HAD NO WISH TO ESCALATE BORDER TENSIONS.

2. SPANISH AMBASSADOR, WHO HAD SET UP APPOINTMENT PREVIOUSLY, CALLED ON ME LATER SAME DAY AND CONVEYED SUBSTANTITALLY THE SAME STORY. HE SAID HE HAD INFORMED BENHIMA EARLY AUGUST 3 OF CLASH AT HAUSA, 70 KILOMETERS INSIDE SAHARA. SPANISH MILITARY ATTACHE HAD ALSO INFORMED COLONEL DLIMI, WHO HAD STATED HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT INCIDENT. BENHIMA TOOK SPANISH AMBASSADOR AND DLIMI THAT EVENING TO SEE KING, WHO SAID HE HAD ORDERED INVESTIAGTION AND THAT IF RESPONSIBILITY COULD BE PINPOINTED, THOSE RESPONSIBLE WOULD BE BROUGHT TO ACCOUNT. KING HAD SEEMED TO MEAN WHAT HE SAID, SPANISH AMBASSADOR COMMENTED. ALSO, SPANISH AMB HAD BEEN PRESENT TO HEAR BENHIMA URGE DLIMI TO KEEP BORDER CALM, HE ADDED.

3. EVEN THOUGH SPANISH CORPORAL HAD BEEN KILLED, SPANISH AMBASSADOR WAS CONCERNED NOT SO MUCH ABOUT INCIDENT PER SE, HE ELABORATED, BUT BECAUSE IT COULD HAVE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS ON POSITIVE EVOLUTION OF OPINION IN SPAIN, ESPECIALLY AMONG MILITARY, TOWARD RECOGNITION OF DESIRABILITY OF COMING TO TERMS WITH MOROCCO. WHEN I INFORMED SPANISH AMBASSADOR OF MY LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH BENHIMA, HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IT WAS GOOD THING FOR MOROCCANS TO KNOW THAT AMERICANS WERE CONCERNED AND THAT WORD WOULD NO DOUBT FILTER BACK TO KING.  
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